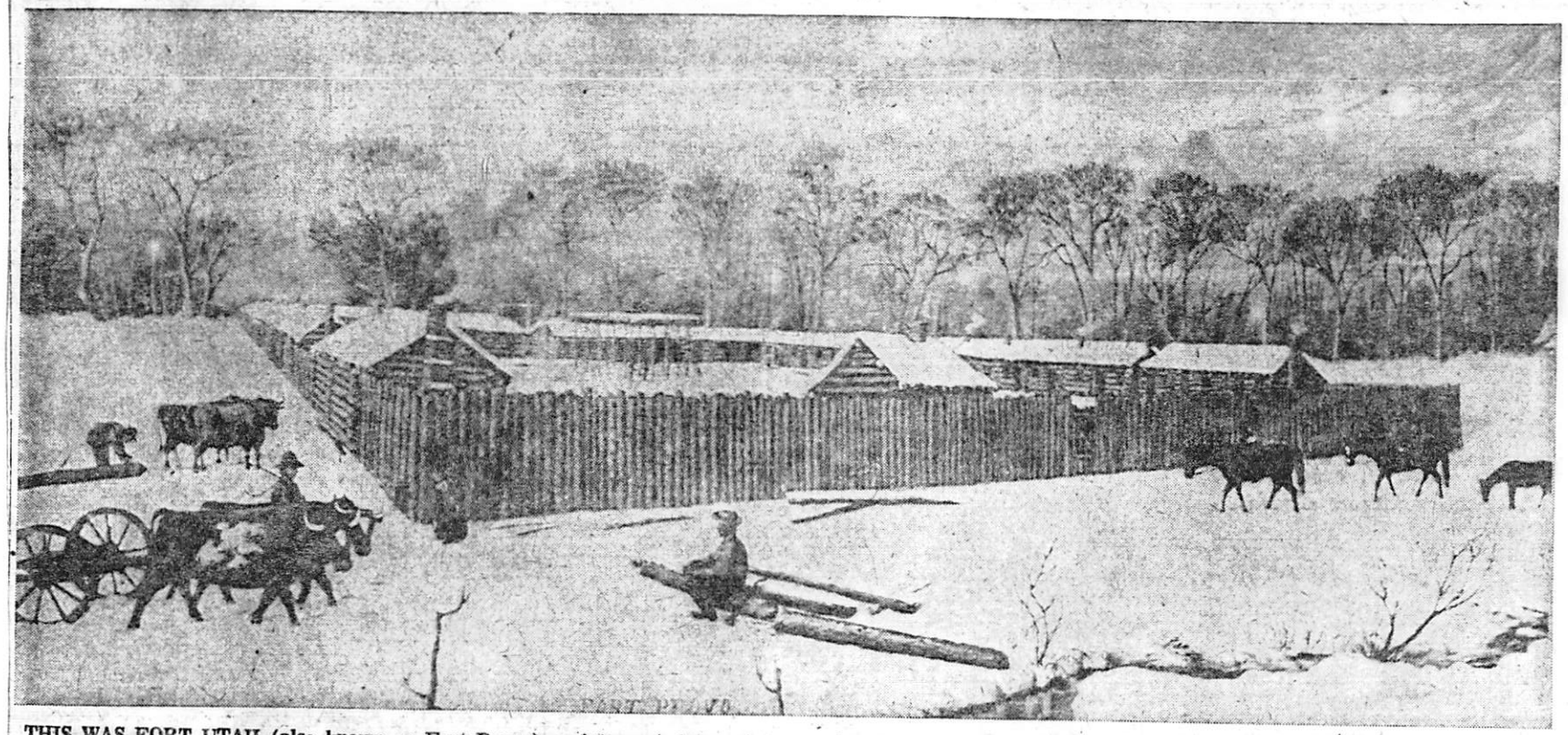

THIS WAS FORT UTAH (also known as Fort Provo) as interpreted in painting by Samuel Jepperson, early-day Provo artist. Note bastian for cannon erected in center. Small stream in foreground was from spring about 25 rods northeast of fort from which the settlers obtained culinary water. Original fort was located 20 rods east of present Geneva Road, about 30 rods south of Provo River. (Photoprint by Joseph M. Boel)

Beginning of Colonization In Provo

Fort Utah: First Pioneer Settlement in Valley

Herald 29 oct 1967

(First of two articles)

By N. La Verl Christensen

Announcement that the Utah Lake Lions Club, in cooperation with Provo City, will build a public park at the site of old Fort Utah has prompted many questions:

—What was Fort Utah?
—Where was it located?
—Why was it built?

Fort Utah, you might say, was Provo's first housing project—Was the first fort actually dismantled and moved or did it remain in use at least until after the new one was completed? This is a question for which there seems no clearcut answer. Both versions can be found in Provo histories. With Indians hostilities a constant threat, logic suggests the pioneers would not have dismantled one fort until the other were at least partially completed.

soon.)

Some distance from Provo River the Mormons were met by Ute Indians who blocked their progress until they had "sworn by the sun" that they would not drive the redman from their lands.

At the site where the original Fort Utah was built, the pioneers found fertile soil to the east, south and west; an abundance of timber, especially from

by a 14-foot stockade with gates at the east and west ends. Box-elder trees, more durable and more accessible than cottonwood trees, were used for lumber. Within the stockade, log cabins, generally roofed with split lumber and dirt, were grouped side by side. Each boasted two cloth-covered windows. (The pioneers had no glass at that time.) Puncheons were used for flooring. The va-

instead of fight" the redmen, tensions mounted almost from the start.

Unlike Salt Lake Valley, which had not been a favorite Indian campground, Utah Valley was a treasured haunt and the annual gathering place of the Ute tribes during the spawning season when fish moving up the river from Utah Lake could be caught with little effort for tra-